Funds for Sector Reforms Scheme

*143. SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA:tt
SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY:

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have stopped releasing funds for the Sector Reforms scheme which was started a few years back as a pilot project for supplying drinking water to the rural areas;

(b) if so, the details thereof and reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken to revive the scheme at an early date?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ANNASAHEB M. K. PATIL): (a) to (c) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) and (b) No, Sir. The funds for the Sector Reforms Projects are being released subject to their fulfilment of the conditions prescribed for the purpose. These pilot projects, however, will be closed on 31.03.2004.

(c) Reforms initiated under Sector Reform Projects on pilot basis would continue and also had been scaled up as Swajaldhara, to cover the entire country.

SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: Sir, unfortunately, the statement does not reveal anything. It is just a statement for the sake of statement. My supplementary number one is this. I would like to know from the hon. Minister, through you, Sir, whether there is any major shift in the approach, as envisaged by the Rural Development Ministry, in the recent past, that the supply of free, safe or potable drinking water to all citizens must be the basic responsibility of the State; if otherwise, what are the reasons thereof. Would the Minister, please, explain them?

SHRI ANNASAHEB M. K. PATIL: Sir, there is no major shift in the policy of the Government of India on the drinking water supply. As far as the supply of drinking water is concerned, it is a State subject, and it

tt The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Manoj Bhattacharya.

depends on how many habitations require the safe drinking water for the people. Therefore, I think, the hon. Member's anxiety is to see how much safe water we can give to each and every place where they need. There is, definitely, a programme under the Sector Reforms, which is the basic question, under which 67 districts have been notified. Out of these 67 districts, in three districts, the programmes have already been closed because of the poor progress, and in 64 districts, there is good progress, and, I think, that would, certainly, suffice the requirement of this scheme under the Sector Reforms.

SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: Sir, my supplementary number two is this. From the Report of the Rural Development Ministry, Annual Report for 2002-03, it is quite evident that whatever reply the Minister has given is not a fact. There are a number of districts where the implementation is very poor; I am not quoting from the Annexure that has been supplied to us in the Annual Report. However, Sir, through you, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the schemes which have been closed in three districts are closed because of the poor progress or because of the dereliction of duty on the part of the collectors, particularly of Bhatinda in Punjab and Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu. Whether it is because of that or because of the poor progress, has to be derived. Sir, I would also like to know about the arsenic prone areas, particularly in West Bengal. In West Bengal, we are terribly suffering because of the arsenic prone areas. Vast areas are arsenic prone, and the money, whatever it is, which should have flown from the Rural Development Ministry, is not flowing to the extent it is required. I would like to know, through you, Sir, from the hon. Minister how much money they have spent for augmenting the free drinking water supply to the citizens, particularly to the poor people living in the SC/ST areas, and whether the problem of drinking water supply to the poor people, the problems of arsenic prone areas and the problem of epidemiology are being taken care of. Thank you very much, Sir.

SHRI ANNASAHEB M. K. PATIL: Sir, I appreciate the anxiety of the Member regarding the poor performance. The basic question is about the Sector Reforms. Under this Scheme, there was a poor performance initially, particularly when it was initiated in 2001 -02; that is true. However, now, the progress is very good, and I find that there will not be much difficulty in completing all the schemes by March, 2004.

As far as the expenses are concerned, as the hon. Member has pointed out regarding various schemes, I do not want to enlighten him on various schemes like ARWSPR or the Minimum Meals Programme or something like that. ...*Interruptions*... But regarding the Sector Reforms, I would say that out of an allocation of Rs. 2,060.45 crores, Rs. 735.86 crores have been spent. Therefore, I think, it is not a bad thing. ...*Interruptions*... As regards his question about the arsenic prone areas, that is a different issue. He should give a separate notice for that.

SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Sir, in our State of Andhra Pradesh, under the Sector Reforms Scheme, seven districts were identified. For each district, about Rs. 40 crores were allocated and the works were grounded; there is a good progress; the collectors have given utilization certificates; and the people have also contributed ten per cent, because under the Scheme, the people's contribution of ten per cent is also requirement. That is also done. The Central Government has sent its team. They are thoroughly satisfied with the work, and they have sent their recommendations. In spite of all this, the money is not being released. I would like to know the reasons for that and when the money will be released to our State.

SHRI ANNASAHEB M. K. PATIL: Sir, in the State of Andhra Pradesh, 7 districts have been identified and the progress is very good, as my friend has very rightly said. There was some delay in submitting the utilisation certificate and therefore, the money was not released. As soon as I get the utilisation certificate, the money will be released because, out of the 7 districts, most of the districts are eligible for the second instalment.

MISS MABEL REBELLO: Sir, this pilot project is in operation for the last three years and not much progress has been made. There is a clause that 10 per cent of the Scheme finance should come from the people and there are a lot of areas in the country where the people are not able to participate. What is happening is that the contractors are giving 10 per cent in advance. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Scheme is meant for the contractors to make money. They are giving 10 per cent in advance. That means they have got some vested interests. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether it

is true that the contractors are making money from this Scheme, or, whether it is meant for providing drinking water to the people.

SHRI ANNASAHEB M. K. PAUL: Sir, whatever the hon. Member has expressed about the contract scheme is not correct.

MISS MABEL REBELLO: Sir, it is correct. I have got the documents. I can substantiate it with documents.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You produce the documents.

SHRI ANNASAHEB M. K. PATIL: Sir, the question relates to Sector Reform Schemes. As far as the Sector Reform Scheme is concerned, the ten per cent contribution from the people in the villages is with the district water and sanitation mission. That means all the money is safe with the banks along with the list of the people who are going to be the beneficiaries. Therefore, I think what the hon. Member has stated is not correct.

SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Sir, the answer to question (c) says that this programme will be continued in the name of Swajaldhara. This Swajaldhara Programme is a very good programme. As of now, there is utter confusion. The people have deposited a lot of money. Take the case of Andhra Pradesh. In Andhra Pradesh alone about Rs. 65 crores had been deposited by the villagers and we were to get Rs. 650 crores worth of schemes. But to our dismay, only schemes worth Rs. 100 crores were sanctioned. The people are eagerly waiting and looking at Delhi. What is happening is that the Centre wants to sanction even a small scheme for the village right from Delhi, without consulting and involving the State Governments. This is the confusion.

There is another small question. The MPs were also asked by the former Minister, Shri Shanta Kumar, to suggest 10 villages and 10 schools. We have made our suggestions. But we don't know what happened to this scheme.

SHRI ANNASAHEB M. K. PATIL: Sir, regarding Swajaldhara, no doubt, it is a good scheme, particularly, for Andhra Pradesh. Whatever the proposals received from the State Government, we have already sanctioned proposals worth Rs. 100 crores and the amount has already been released. But there is some proportion. We have some shortage of funds. There is some shortage in the allocation of funds.

According to the allocation of funds, I am sure, whatever the share of Andhra Pradesh, that will be there and it will be released. ...*Interruptions*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Next question. Question No. 144.

SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: They could have indicated in the beginning itself.

Terrorist incidents in J&K

*144. SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH:††
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether terrorist incidents have increased in Jammu and Kashmir during the last two months;

(b) if so, whether army camps and innocent people in Jammu and Kashmir have become again the targets of terrorist activities; and

(c) the new strategy which Government plan to adopt to counter these activities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI I.D. SWAMI): (a) to (c) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) and (b) No, Sir. While last week there were two ugly terrorist incidents at Katra and Tanda respectively, however overall there has not been any significant change in terrorist activities in J&K in past two months in comparison with the preceding two months as well as corresponding period last year.

Comparative figure of terrorists acts of violence and resultant deaths in the State of J&K as reported by the State Government are given below:—

---

††The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri K. Natwar Singh.